

U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Mid-Pacific Region
Lahontan Basin Area Office
Carson City, Nevada


Finding of No Significant Impact
and
Final Environmental Assessment

TC1 Lateral Easement Crossings
Lyon County, Nevada

October 2007

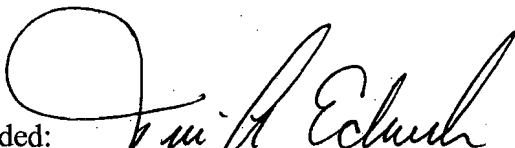
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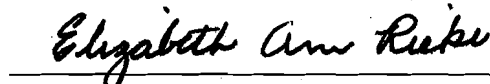
Date: 10/3/07

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Date: 10/3/07

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TC1 Lateral Easement Crossings Environmental Assessment

I. Background

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Newlands Project provides water for irrigation and wetlands purposes from the Truckee and Carson Rivers for approximately 57,000 acres in the Lahontan Valley near Fallon and Fernley in western Nevada.

Reclamation has a 60-foot wide easement for the TC1 Lateral located in Fernley, Nevada. Water is diverted from the Truckee Canal into the TC1 and other lateral canals to irrigate land in the Truckee Division of the Newlands Project. The Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes the City of Fernley (City) and Southwest Gas Corporation requests to cross the TC1 Lateral easement in two locations for installation of two culverts and short sections (60 feet) of a road extension, a road widening, and buried pipelines.

The City is proposing to construct a groundwater treatment plant to produce water that meets the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency arsenic standard for delivery to City customers. The plant is expected to be completed in July 2009. The City proposes a total of approximately 12.7 miles of pipeline to service the groundwater treatment plant. The two 60-foot crossings of Reclamation's TC1 Lateral easement would allow the City and Southwest Gas Corporation to extend pipelines that would provide the plant natural gas service and convey untreated groundwater to the plant and treated water from the plant to City customers. The crossings would also allow extension of Mesa Drive across the 60-foot easement as part of a road extension into the proposed plant location.

The EA evaluated the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. No significant adverse impacts to the environment were found in the EA evaluations. Reclamation has found that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for the proposed actions within the TC1 Lateral easement. The October 2007 EA is incorporated by reference in this FONSI.

II. Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to facilitate the conveyance of untreated/treated water and natural gas to and from the City groundwater treatment plant as well as provide for a section of road extension to access the plant. The City needs to cross the TC1 Lateral canal easement in two locations because it is the most efficient and cost effective pipeline route; the Southwest Gas Corporation pipeline would follow the same route.

III. Alternative Descriptions

Alternative 1 - Proposed Action:

Reclamation would provide concurrence for crossing Reclamation's 60-foot wide easement for the TC1 Lateral irrigation canal in two locations. Both TC1 Lateral crossings would encompass an area approximately 20 feet in width and 60 feet in length.

West Mesa Drive TC1 Lateral Crossing:

The western crossing would involve trenching to bury four types of pipelines beneath the TC1 canal; the total length of pipelines located within the Reclamation easement would be 60 feet. The four types of pipelines are as follows:

1. 30-inch diameter pipe for raw groundwater to be piped to the water treatment facility
2. 42-inch diameter pipe for treated water leaving the facility
3. A 10-inch diameter sewer line servicing the facility
4. Two 2-inch diameter natural gas pipelines servicing the facility

A box culvert would be installed spanning the TC1 Lateral. The culvert would be 50 feet long, 5 feet wide and 4 feet high. On top of the culvert a 24-foot wide paved road with 4-foot shoulders would be installed to extend Mesa Drive into the future groundwater treatment plant. Sixty feet of the road extension would be within Reclamation's easement.

East Mesa Drive TC1 Lateral Crossing:

The eastern crossing parallels Mesa Drive and would have the same types of pipelines as described above except there would be no natural gas pipeline. The existing culvert would be removed during the trenching to bury the pipes; after the pipes are buried a 36-inch diameter culvert, 60 feet long would be installed in the location of the previous culvert. On top of the culvert the existing road would be widened to 24 feet with 4-foot shoulders.

Construction related to the western crossing would begin in fall 2007 and take up to four months to complete. The eastern crossing would be constructed during 2008. The easement would continue to be held in the name of the United States. The City and Southwest Gas and their contractors would be responsible for construction, operation and maintenance of their operations and for obtaining any necessary State and local permits. Reclamation and the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District would maintain the right of access to operate and maintain the TC1 Lateral.

Alternative 2 - No Action:

Reclamation would not provide concurrence to allow the City and Southwest Gas Corporation to cross Reclamation's 60-foot wide TC1 easement in two locations to bury pipes or widen and extend Mesa Drive. The City and Southwest Gas Corporation would be required to find alternate pipeline and road extension routes that do not cross the Reclamation easement. The City has

identified an alternative route that is feasible but less cost effective and more difficult to construct and maintain.

IV. Summary of Impacts

Reclamation's analysis in the EA indicates that there will be limited impacts from implementation of the Proposed Action alternative in the EA. Adverse impacts are restricted to short-term effects. The following resources are not discussed in the EA: economics, hydrology, climate, soils, floodplains and wetlands, fisheries, geology, mineral resources, recreation, land use, topography, energy, or hazardous waste. Impacts to these resources were considered but not analyzed in detail because they are not affected by the project. No significant effects were identified for any resource. A summary of the impacts for resources considered in detail in the EA is as follows:

1. Vegetation and Wildlife: The vegetation in the lateral currently consists primarily of low priority weed species (morning glory ground vine, Russian thistle, and grasses), a noxious weed (tall whitetop) and some native endemic species (sagebrush, narrow leaf willow and cottonwood). The Proposed Action would likely completely remove the vegetation within the 20-foot by 60-foot footprint at each of the two crossing locations during construction. This ground disturbance would likely encourage a heavier infestation of weeds in the construction footprint area.

During the construction of the trench and roads and burying of the pipes, local wildlife may be displaced by the noise and disturbance. These potential effects to wildlife are not significant and would be minimal and temporary.

3. Special Status Species: There are no threatened or endangered species or habitat within either the 20-foot by 60-foot footprint or within the proximity of the crossings.
4. Water Resources and Quality: There would be no impacts to groundwater from the pipeline and road extension construction activities of the Proposed Action Alternative. Sedimentation may increase slightly to the surface irrigation water from loosened soil during construction; however the amount would be temporary and minimal and is not significant.
5. Air Quality: Current air quality in the project area is good. Under the Proposed Action, there may be temporary small increases in fugitive dust emissions and equipment exhaust from construction activities. These dust emissions and exhaust impacts are not significant and would be short-term and occur only during construction hours.
6. Noise: The current noise levels in the project area are very low. It is a residential area and the ambient noise is primarily from residential activity and the nearby railroad track. Under the Proposed Action Alternative noise levels will increase temporarily during the period of construction due to the use of heavy equipment, but would be short term and not significant.
7. Visual Resources: Under the Proposed Action alternative there will be heavy equipment

activity visible at the two project sites during construction. After the completion of construction, there will be a road extension spanning the TC1 Lateral at the west end of Mesa Drive. The visual effect from construction will be temporary, until construction of the bridge and canal crossing is completed. The visual effect of the presence of the road extension at the western Mesa Drive location will be minor. The only visual effect from the canal crossing at the eastern Mesa Drive location after construction will be a minor modification in the vegetation growing in the lateral in the construction footprint.

8. Transportation: Under the Proposed Action the construction of the pipeline trench, road widening and road crossing will cause a temporary increase in traffic during construction hours.
9. Cultural Resources: An archaeological field inspection and survey of the two crossings designed to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act were conducted on July 25, 2007. No cultural resources were identified within the area of potential affect. Reclamation has consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office and received concurrence that modification of the TC1 easement for the crossings will not affect any historic properties.
10. Indian Trust Assets: There are no trust resources within the affected area of the TC1 Lateral easement crossings.
11. Environmental Justice: The Proposed Action Alternative would not disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations within the community.
12. Indirect Effects: The indirect effects of the proposed action are related to the road crossing of Reclamation's TC1 easement at the West Mesa Drive Crossing. Allowing the crossing will result in the use of Mesa Drive to access the water treatment plant. Indirect effects of the access road in this location include minor amounts of long-term increased traffic, short-term construction traffic, and occasional truck traffic hauling chemicals that will be used at the water treatment plant. None of these impacts are considered significant.
13. Cumulative Effects: Additional production wells are being investigated to provide water to the plant and additional crossings of Reclamation easements may be requested in the future. If additional crossings are requested, the environmental effects of the crossings would likely be similar to the minor impacts identified in this EA and cumulatively would not be significant.

V. Comments Received on the EA

Advertisements requesting comments on the proposed TC1 Lateral crossings and Draft EA were placed in the Fernley Leader - Courier and press releases were sent to Reclamation's Regional "Mid-Pacific All the News" list. No public comments were received on the project.

A consultation letter dated July 30, 2007 requesting scoping comments on the proposed crossings

was sent to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (Tribe). A letter dated August 6, 2007 was also sent to the Tribe by Reclamation's Regional archaeology staff requesting information regarding sites of religious or cultural significance. Reclamation did not receive comments from the Tribe on either letter. The draft EA and a letter requesting EA review and comments were provided to the Tribe on August 27, 2007.

The Tribe provided comments on the Draft EA requesting that the NEPA document analyze the development of the City's proposed plant in an Environmental Impact Statement. Reclamation did not analyze the plant development in the NEPA document because Reclamation considers the groundwater treatment plant to be outside the scope of the purpose and need for the federal action being undertaken by Reclamation.

VI. Decision and Findings

Reclamation's decision is to implement Alternative 1, identified as the Proposed Action in the EA. Based on the environmental analysis contained in the attached EA (October 2007) completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act there is no evidence to indicate that the Proposed Action will significantly affect the quality of the human environment or the natural resources in the area. In addition, the proposed action is not a major federal action. An environmental impact statement is not required for the Proposed Action.